

Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
FY 12 Operating Budget Comments before Department of Health and Human Services
November 1, 2010
Patricia Gallalee, Chair | Charlie Crawford, Vice-Chair

Good Evening, my name is Patricia Gallalee and I am speaking on behalf of the Commission on People with Disabilities. We recognize the County's fiscal crisis and know that tough decisions are going to be made. At minimum, we hope that you will be able to sustain programs so that people do not lose needed services. This may be the right time to rethink how long term care services are provided, and to who. We recommend an intake questionnaire that asks the right questions so that if people are eligible for federal or state funding they are referred to those programs, and County dollars only used until they obtain those benefits.

Medicaid Waivers are a main source of funding for people with significant disabilities. The problem is that those who do not qualify for Medicaid but who are the working poor are mostly left out of needed services. Prevention and case management for those not in crisis or needed protective services has been vanishing forcing people to go into crisis to receive services. We ask that the department develop a plan to address the needs of those who may just need some assistance before they are forced into a crisis.

We recommend the following:

- **Stop the cuts to the DD Supplement/Match and restore what was lost**
- **Continue funding the Group Home Rehab program in DHCA**
- **Restore respite care hours to 164**
- **Develop classification for interns currently in the Customized Employment Program so that they can apply for merit positions like aides for the library**
- **Increase AP1-10 supported employment contracts that go to non-profits who employ people with disabilities to do work for the county**
- **Restoration of \$100,000 in the In-Home Aide Care program**
- **Continue Call 'N Ride program at the current funding level**

While we applaud the enhanced funding for Ride On, it is essential that Metro Access be fully maintained and improved. The State has the contract for Metro Access but we believe the County must take some responsibility to ensure that safe and satisfactory service be provided to those residents of Montgomery County who are so dependent on this service. We have supported the increased cost of Metro Access, but we must have improved service in return. There is a strong connection between the availability of a reliable transportation system to the ability of persons with disabilities being able to get to and from work so their dependency on other financial assistance is diminished.

As noted above, the full provision of adequate services for persons with disabilities must be a priority of Montgomery County in FY 2012. While funds may be short, the demand is growing, and will continue to grow. Montgomery County must do better for its citizens with disabilities. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you.

“A Community's Budgetary Choices and Policies Reflect its Values”